

HOME — Big Kids — Kids Safety — Stranger Safety

Raising Street-Smart Kids

Teach your children to be safety-savvy.

By **Gina Costa**



Kids naturally love to play outdoors, but with this comes the added parental responsibility of making sure your kids are streetwise and know some basic safety tips.

Print out our lists of safety rules and post them on the refrigerator where they can be a daily reminder to your child. Go over them as a family and play the "what if" game. Ask your children what they would do in certain situations and discuss the best way to handle dangerous situations.

The basics

- Don't hang around parks, woods, parking lots, schoolyards, or places that may be deserted after hours.
- Learn the best route to school and other places you frequent.
- Never go with anybody you don't know, no matter what they tell you.
- Never open the door when you're home alone and don't let callers know you're home alone. If it's an emergency, call 911 without opening the door
- Always stick with a friend whenever you go someplace.

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Stranger strategies

- Don't trust anyone you don't know well.
- Always say no if someone asks you to go with them, no matter what, unless your parent has said yes and knows where you are.
- Don't listen to stories that a stranger tells you to convince you to go with them.
- Don't go with a stranger, even if there seems to be an emergency and they say it involves someone in your family. If a stranger really needs help, they will go elsewhere and seek out other adults.
- Never get close to anyone who approaches you or asks for help from their car.
- Always stay at least one adult arm's length away from any stranger you're talking to so you can get away if you need to.

Shopping safety

- Always stay close to the person you're shopping with.
- Agree on a meeting place where you can regroup in case you get lost.
- If you get lost, ask a store employee for help -- make sure they're wearing a plastic badge with the store name on it, or already behind a counter helping customers.
- Never go with a stranger who offers to help you if you get lost.

Apartment alert

- Know which places in an apartment building are safe to play in, and which could be dangerous.
- Always stay away from deserted places such as stairwells and storage rooms.
- Stand by the control panel when riding the elevator without a grown-up you know. This way you can press the emergency button or the button for the next

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riding the elevator.

- If someone gets on the elevator who makes you nervous, get off the elevator.
- If you feel scared, go to the nearest apartment, but don't go inside. Have them call your apartment or the lobby desk, if there is one.

Bullies 101

- Always tell a grown-up you trust about any bully that's bothering you.
- If a bully bothers you, either stay close to an adult or with a group of friends or avoid the place where the bully hangs out.
- Be firm with bullies. If a bully tries to take something from you, say no.
- If you're in danger, give them what they want and run away -- your first priority is to stay safe, not defeat the bully.

The information on this Web site is designed for educational purposes only. It is not intended to be a substitute for informed medical advice or care. You should not use this information to diagnose or treat any health problems or illnesses without consulting your pediatrician or family doctor. Please consult a doctor with any questions or concerns you might have regarding your or your child's condition.

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Healthy Kid

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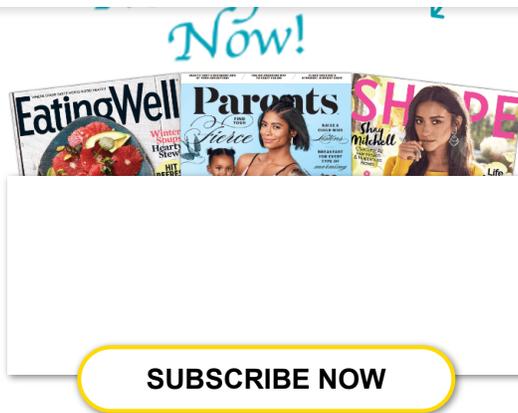
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